

Structure, Change and Social Mobility in Europe

Simon Seiler

Motivation

- Research on social mobility has been dominated by the functionalist modernization thesis for a long time – a thesis which is not supported by empirical evidence.
 - So far, no alternative framework has been presented to explain varying effects of social origin (Goldthorpe 2014).
- ⇒ This poster presents a first step towards a contribution to such explanations by analyzing the influence of class structure and change on effects of social origin.

Theoretical Considerations & Hypothesis

- Resources for the transmission of social positions are thought to be class-specific.
 - Especially resource demanding are the classes of self-employed, farmers and elites.
 - Rapid change can devalue the resources available for the transmission of social positions.
- ⇒ *Hypothesis:* Sizes and changes in sizes of resource-demanding classes matter for effects of social origin (self-employed, farmers, elites).

Data

- The 2011 EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC; Eurostat 2015) is used.
- Includes a module on intergenerational transmission of disadvantages with information on both parent's education and occupation for all EU-countries (ex. SE) plus CH, FI and NO; only respondents aged 35–60 are included ($N=133\,871$).
- Mother's and father's class is used to construct the class-structure (by country and 5-year interval); the interval which includes age 24 is used.
- Changes over 10 years are calculated ($t_k - t_{k-10}$).

Method

- Effects of social origin is measured by an approach based on Proportional Reduction of Error (PRE).
- It measures the improvement of the prediction of respondents class by including parents' characteristics (cf., Jann/Seiler 2014). Father's class and mother's education is used for the analysis.
- Country fixed-effects of class and change are reported; standard-errors are bootstrapped.

Results & Conclusion

- Fig. 2 shows that effects of social origin actually differ by country and gender.
- ⇒ There is variance worthwhile to explain.
- However, Fig. 1 shows that the size of class does not have any statistically significant country fixed-effects on the PRE-measure of effects of social origin. The same is true for the changes in the size of the occupational classes although for women, the positive effect of the growth of the class of non-manual employees on cost of the upper service ($p=0.051$) or homemakers ($p=0.063$) just missed the required level of significance.
 - Note, however, that there are significant between country effects of class-size. But as survey-quality differ between countries and the PRE-measure depends on data-quality, these results cannot be trusted and are not shown here.
- ⇒ No effects of the size or the change of the size of social classes within countries can be found using EU-SILC data. Some results suggest that it could be worthwhile to re-analyze these effects with additional data such as the ESS-data.



Fig. 1 shows the effect of class-sizes and class-changes over the last 10 years at age 24 on the PRE-measure. Father's class and mother's education is used here to estimate the effects of social origin, measured by the PRE. As relative class-sizes sum up 100 and differences to zero, one class has to shrink as one class grows. The "from"-class denotes the class which is allowed to shrink. The markers show country fixed effects using a hybrid model; country-specific time-trends are included in all models. The spikes represent the 95%-confidence interval based on bootstrapped standard errors.

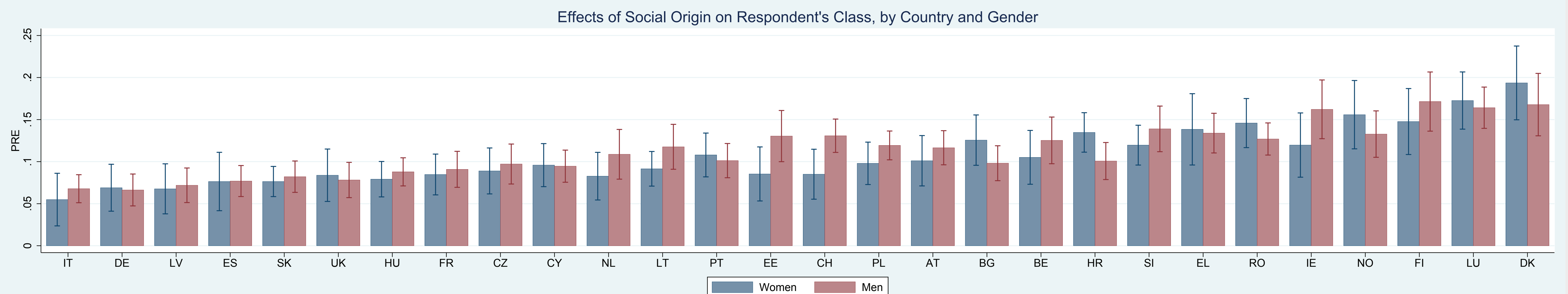


Fig. 2 shows how effects of social origin vary by country and gender. Both parents' class and education are used here to calculate the PRE-measure. The spikes represent the 95%-confidence interval based on bootstrapped standard errors.

References: Eurostat (2015). Cross-sectional EU-SILC 2011 database. Release Mai 2015, European Commission, Eurostat. — Goldthorpe, J. H. (2014). The Role of Education in Intergenerational Social Mobility: Problems from Empirical Research in Sociology and some Theoretical Pointers from Economics. *Rationality and Society*, 26(3), 265–289. — Jann, B. & Seiler, S. (2014). A New Methodological Approach for Studying Intergenerational Mobility With an Application to Swiss Data. University of Bern Social Sciences Working Paper No. 5. Retrieved from <http://ideas.repec.org/p/bss/wpaper/5.html> [24.02.2014].